

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000414

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, NEA/ARP, NEA/PPD, PA, INR/NESA  
STATE FOR IIP/G/NEA-SA, INR/B  
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE  
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH, PARIS FOR O'FRIEL  
USDOC FOR 4520/ANESA/ONE/FITZGERALD-WILKS  
USDOC FOR ITA AND PTO/OLIA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KU](#) [KDMR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - IRAQI ELECTIONS; JANUARY 31

-----  
Summary  
-----

1. Kuwaiti TV dedicated extensive coverage to Iraqi elections and conducted an interview with a former MP and Minister of Education on the subject. All editorials praised the Iraqi people's courage in braving the security situation to cast their votes. End summary.

-----  
Kuwaiti TV  
-----

2. Kuwaiti TV broadcast extensive coverage of and interviews focused on the Iraqi elections. Forty-five minutes of coverage on the elections in the main evening newscast hailed them as a "success." The broadcaster concluded: "Despite difficult circumstances, the Iraqi people overcame all and cast their votes."

3. Guest speaker and former MP Dr. Ahmed Al-Rubei expressed his admiration of the Iraqi people for standing in the face of terrorism to cast their votes. He said, "We hope Iraq will be more stable which, in turn, will reflect positively on Kuwait. They have shown courage and it is a firm blow to those who threatened the elections. The Iraqi people have sent a message to terrorists that they are not afraid. The Iraqi people have suffered, and it is their right to have this opportunity. They have shown the world that they want democracy." When asked who would win, Dr. Al-Rubei replied: "There will be various groups, which is fine, as it is healthy and important. They know what is best for them and they no longer want to be controlled."

4. Kuwaiti TV correspondents conducted interviews in various regions of Iraq. All mentioned that the number of voters was higher than expected in view of the security situation. Kuwaiti correspondents in Amman and Tehran also filed positive reports about Iraqi expats casting their votes.

5. President Bush's speech on the occasion was also broadcast in full with Arabic voice-over.

-----  
Block Quotes  
-----

6. Liberal columnist Salah al-Sayer wrote in independent Al-Anba: "Iraq is making toward political, economic, and social progress at an astronomical speed. Iraqis are headed to election centers and beginning their peaceful march toward democracy with the blessing of the greatest superpower on earth. Liberation of Iraq was not the cresting of an earthquake, but the floating tip of the iceberg. Iraq's liberation by military intervention was the beginning of a great civil project called the Greater Middle East Initiative. A new political regime, promised years ago by President Bush when he described it as 'an example to be followed,' is now emerging in Iraq."

7. Liberal columnist Mohammed Zain wrote in independent Al-Seyassah: "The people of Iraq have marched forcefully towards the electoral polling centers to exercise their right to vote, a practice of which they were deprived for many years. It was a new and authentic experience, which they accomplished with great success. The world has applauded them for allowing Iraqi women to participate alongside their men. We praise every Iraqi who participated in the elections. By so doing, they are making strides toward a better future where they will be able to overcome the terrorists who tried to rob them of their rights with threats and terror."

8. Liberal and pro-government editor-in-chief Ahmad Al-Jarrallah wrote in independent Al-Seyassah: "The will of the Iraqi leadership and the courage of Iraqis have led to the defeat of terrorism. The extraordinary will of Iraqis has helped them build the foundation of a modern country while the terrorists' attempts to scare the people of Iraq away from voting have failed miserably. Iraq has proven that iron-fisted authority is the only

way to deal with terrorism. The success of the Iraqi elections has ended misconceptions about `resistance.' Claims that Saddam Hussein will defeat the United States have vanished into thin air."

19. Liberal columnist Dr. Ahmad Bishara wrote in independent Al-Qabas: "Merely from sheer self-interest, Kuwait, unlike the rest of the countries of the region, came down on the side of Iraq's liberation. Kuwait's position was formulated on unadulterated security considerations. Saddam's downfall was an absolute Kuwaiti goal. From this perspective, the Iraqi elections are a source of great import to Kuwait and offer a reward with respect to Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations. Iraq today enters freedom and democracy through the widest of doors. This is the alternative to despotic regimes which sow extremism, violence, hate, and the destruction of man."

LeBaron